1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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II

Mountains, Plains, and the Sea

13 In a literal sense, the rainbow in the rock is the magical coloring of the Greek landscape, the crystal-clear air, and the intensely blue sea. Anyone who paints the Greek sea as it actually looks runs the risk of skepticism from critics abroad who might well say, "no sea could be so blue, in so many shades," particularly if all they have for comparison is the gray Atlantic. An artist friend told of a young Swedish painter who came to Greece after considerable success in landscape painting in Italy and France.[1] For six weeks he tried to paint, but nothing looked right. It was only after he developed new techniques that he began to catch the spectrum of opalescent colors, the strong variations in light and shadow, and the sharp delicacy of forms visible at a considerable distance. Anywhere in Greece the physical environment is impressive, not as a backdrop to be taken for granted, but as a sensation to be enjoyed in its own right.[2]

182 [829 13] Perhaps this is why so many Greeks are ready to accept geographic determinism as an explanation of their difficulties. There, spread out for all to see, are the effects of climate, of differences in terrain, of dwindling or unprotected resources. And the temptation is strong to assume that all troubles would pass away if only the earth were more fertile or if heaven shed its rain more plentifully. But the explanation is not quite so simple. Those turning to the philosophy of history for an answer might be told by

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

someone like Arnold Toynbee that Greece's early greatness grew out of the stern necessity to respond to the challenge of a partly hostile environment and a population growing beyond its means of subsistence. 182

Although the study of Greece's past shows that the cultural, or man-made, aspects of life have been tremendously important, one must nevertheless give the physical environment its just due. This leads to a consideration of some of the cold, hard facts about the rock that is Greece.

The Regions of Greece

Each of the regions of Greece, shown on the accompanying map, has its own assortment of mountains, plains, and a stretch of coastline; each has its own history and traditions; each has its own problems posed by the 101 13

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1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

physical environment. To follow the story of village life in Greece as portrayed in this book, one must be able to go imaginatively from one part of Greece to another, since every experience described will be related to the place where it occurred.

Macedonia, linked historically with Alexander the Great and the missionary activities of St. Paul, is a part of the administrative division of Northern Greece. Its northern mountain barrier separates it from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, each of which has adjoining territory which it too calls Macedonia. The Greeks believe that no area has been more bled over than Macedonia, where Greek and Slav meet.

Thrace, to the east, is also in Northern Greece and is the one area where the Turkish minority still live. Like Macedonia, it is famous for the Oriental kind of tobacco grown there.

Epirus, the northwestern province, is a mountainous land of great beauty and stormy traditions. It borders Albania.

Thessaly, south of Macedonia, boasts Mount Olympus and fertile plains which produce a fifth of the country's wheat.

Central Greece, stretching from the Ionian to the Aegean Seas, holds many tourist attractions such as Thebes, Delphi, and Athens. It also includes the slender island of Euboea along its eastern flank.

The Peloponnesus, separated from the rest of mainland Greece by the Corinth Canal, is an archaeologist's paradise. It is important agriculturally as well as being intimately connected with Greece's liberation from Turkey in 1829.

In addition to these regions on the mainland there are five island groupings in the Greek kingdom:

The Aegean Islands hug the coast of Turkey. Lesbos is the largest, Chios perhaps the best known.

The Dodecanese Islands, to the southeast of the mainland, came under Greek control after World War II with the defeat of the Italians. Rhodes, the chief island, is one of the major tourist attractions of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Cyclades Islands are also to the southeast of, but nearer to, mainland Greece. Tinos, one of these islands, is the site of a miracle-working shrine visited by thousands of visitors every year on the Day of the Assumption.

Crete stands alone. Its civilization predates that of the mainland. Because of its better soil, more of its people are interested in farming than in fishing or shipping.

The Ionian Islands, on the west coast of Greece, were the hardest hit in the devastating earthquakes of August 1953. They include the beautiful island of Corfu, which was not damaged, as well as Ithaca, home of Odysseus.

These regions, particularly those of the mainland, will be more than names on the map as one becomes familiar with the peasants who dwell in them and with many of the natural features associated with the mountains, the plains, and the sea.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

slavia and Albania come together, and a Turkish Moslem minority in Thrace. Official figures on the size of these minorities have not been published, but in all probability neither much exceeds 60,000 persons.

Greece is a small country, with a total area of slightly more than 50,000 square miles, or just about the size of the state of Illinois. It is also a poor country, lacking in any very important natural resources, short of fuel, but blessed with a magnificent climate similar to that of southern California. The country is very mountainous. Patches of fertile land, none of them very large, are separated from each other by tangles of barren hill and mountain. The main crops are wheat, grapes, olives, cotton and tobacco; and of these tobacco is by all odds the most important for foreign trade, since all the wheat and nearly all the cotton, wine and olive oil are consumed within the country, leaving only a surplus of tobacco, currants and a few other specialized agricultural products for export.

Industry is comparatively weak. Greek industrial exports have seldom been able to compete in price or quality on world markets. The Greek merchant marine, on the other hand, is one of the important fleets of the world; but many Greek-owned ships are not registered in Greece, and many of the most successful Greek shipowners do not live in the country of their birth. The reason is that Greek taxes on ships and shipowners are heavier than those levied by some other countries, and the shipowners therefore find it expedient to register their ships and take their profits elsewhere. They do, however, often recruit their crews in the home country, and thus offer a source of employment to several thousand Greeks.

Greece fought on the Allied side in both the first and second world wars, suffered German and Italian occupation between 1941 and 1944, and became a special British "sphere of influence" in political and military matters during 1944–46. Since